

## Description of two new muricacean species (Gastropoda: Muricidae) from Sri Lanka and Western Australia

**Roland Houart**

St Jobsstraat, 8, B-3330 Landen (Ezemaal), Belgium  
(Scientific Collaborator at the Institute Royal des  
Sciences Naturelles de Belgique)

### ABSTRACT

Two new species of the family Muricidae are named. *Orania alexanderi*, included in the subfamily Ergalataxinae, is described from Trincomalee, Sri Lanka. *Typhis (Typhis) wellsii*, a member of the subfamily Typhinae, is described from north of Port Hedland, Western Australia.

### INTRODUCTION

The muricid subfamily Ergalataxinae is being studied by Dr Emily H. Vokes (Tulane University) and her help was most useful to include the new species described here in an adequate genus. After revision, this obscure subfamily will include many species (and genera) previously included in the Muricinae, Muricopsinae and Trophoninae.

The better known subfamily Typhinae includes several Australasian species, both fossil and recent. The new taxon is here compared with two recent and five fossil species.

### TAXONOMY

**Subfamily: Ergalataxinae Kuroda, Habe & Oyama, 1971.**

**Genus: *Orania* Pallary, 1900**

Type species: *Murex spadae* Libassi, 1859 by O.D. (= *Murex fusulus* Brocchi).

***Orania alexanderi* R. Houart sp. nov.**

Plate 1, figures 1-4.

### Description

Shell moderately large for the genus, maximum length 20 mm. Color dark orange to dark brown, with brown specimens showing orange-coloured spiral cords.

Aperture ovate, elongate, light purple. Columellar lip completely adherent to the shell or very slightly erect on 2/3 of its anterior part; it bears 3 to 4 small denticles posteriorly and a shallow

callus posteriorly. Outer lip slightly crenulate; inner side bearing six strong elongate, lighter-coloured denticles. Anal sulcus deep, well delimited by a moderately strong callus on its left and by a denticle on its right; slightly channelled posteriorly. Spire high, consisting of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  polished, conical nuclear whorls and 6 to 7 postnuclear whorls. Suture impressed.

Body whorl bearing 7 to 8 moderately strong axial ridges; no other axial sculpture. Spiral sculpture consisting of 5 squamous cords and fine intermediate squamous threads. Usually lighter-coloured nodes are formed where the cords cross the axial ridges. Four to 5 threads on the shoulder and a large cord just below the suture, also appearing on the earlier whorls. One squamous cord on the siphonal canal.

Siphonal canal short, open, very slightly backward bent.

#### Type material

Holotype and one paratype in the Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique in Brussels. IRSNB No. 26811/1 and 26811/2.

1 paratype in the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, type collection.

1 paratype British Museum (Natural History) No. 1984161.

1 paratype Natal Museum, S. Africa, No. J8581/T2963.

1 paratype Australian Museum, Sydney, No. C143672.

2 paratypes Natural Museum of Sri Lanka.

All specimens ex R. Isaacs collection.

#### Type locality

Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, taken by fishermen.

#### Etymology

Named after Mr Brian Alexander from Sri Lanka, who kindly sent some lots of this shell for examination.

#### Discussion

The genus *Orania* is here chosen for the affinities between the radula of *Orania alexanderi* and that of the type species. Moreover, the dentate aperture, the multispiral protoconch and the general outline of the shell demonstrate the relationship with that genus, within the subfamily. This new species is very different from any other species belonging to this subfamily and no species other than *Murex infans* E.A. Smith, 1884 (*Muricopsis infans* of authors) could be reasonably compared. *M. infans*, the holotype of which was illustrated by Kaicher (1980), is smaller, has a broader aperture, fewer spiral cords and lacks the spiral cord on the shoulder. Another species, *Murex singaporensis* A. Adams, 1853, which could be in the Ergalataxinae, could not be compared as it was never illustrated, and there is no trace of a type in the BM(NH), where the A. Adams types are deposited; this species may be regarded as a *nomen dubium*.

**Subfamily: Typhinae Cossmann, 1903**

**Genus: *Typhis* Montfort, 1810**

Type species: *Purpura tubifer* Bruguière, 1791, by O.D.

***Typhis (Typhis) welsi* sp. nov.**

Plate 2, figures 1-3.

#### Description

Shell medium sized for the genus, broadly fusiform; greyish-white or pinkish-white on its whole surface. Aperture of the same color, small, rounded, forming an entire, erect and smooth peristome; no apparent anal notch.

Spire high, consisting of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  to 2 glossy, large and rounded nuclear whorls and 5 large, rounded postnuclear whorls. Suture slightly appressed. Body whorl bearing 4 rounded varices, joining the preceding whorl with a strong varical buttress. Varices ornamented with 4 closed, slightly upwardly recurved spines. Carinal spine longest.

One white anal tube present between each varix, rising from the succeeding varix, strongly backward recurved and a little upward.

Spiral sculpture of the body whorl consisting of 4 to 6 very shallow cords. Siphonal canal moderate in length, acute, completely sealed, slightly bent to the right and bearing a short, backward recurved sharp and closed spine on its base.

#### **Type material**

Holotype No. 3076-83 in the Western Australian Museum.

#### **Type locality**

114 nautical miles north of Port Hedland, Western Australia, Strn. 5, 02/82/13A, L. Marsh on "Soela", 2. iv. 1982, dredged 201 m, limestone rubble and gray mud.

#### **Dimensions**

Holotype: 22 x 14.5 mm.

#### **Etymology**

Named after Dr F.E. Wells, Head of the Department of Malacology of the Western Australian Museum, who originally illustrated the shell in "Australian Shell News" and who kindly sent it to me for study.

#### **Discussion**

*Typhis wellsii* was previously illustrated in Australian Shell News (Wells, 1983) under the name *Typhina philippensis*. The originally illustrated specimen is here made the holotype.

It may be compared with seven more or less related species discussed by Vella (1961). From *T. philippensis* Watson, 1883 and *T. philippensis interpres* Iredale, 1924 it differs by its broader and larger protoconch; both, species and subspecies, are missing also the typical varical buttress of *T. wellsii* and have larger apertures. From *T. maccoyi* Tenison Woods, 1876, an Oligocene fossil of Tasmania, it differs by its smaller aperture, larger protoconch and the presence of the varical buttress; *T. maccoyi* has also a more slender siphonal canal. *T. planus* Vella, 1961, *T. hebetatus* Hutton, 1877, *T. adventus* Vella, 1961 and *T. cliffdenensis* Vella, 1961 Oligocene and Miocene fossils of New Zealand differ all by missing the very typical varical buttress. Moreover, *T. hebetatus* has almost horizontal and larger tubes and a larger aperture. *T. adventus*, the most similar species, has sharper varices and a more ovate aperture.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am most grateful to Dr F. Wells (Western Australian Museum) and to Mr Ralph Isaacs (London) who gave me the opportunity to examine these species; to Dr P. Bouchet (Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris) for the most useful scanning micrographs of the radula and to Dr P.A. Maxwell (New Zealand Geological Survey) who procured and loaned me fossil species for comparison. Thanks also to Dr W.F. Ponder and Mr I. Loch (Australian Museum, Sydney) for the loan of *Typhis philippensis interpres* (holotype); to Mr B. Marshall (National Museum of New Zealand) for information; to Mr A. D'Attilio (Natural History Museum, San Diego) for his suggestions and to Mrs M.L. Buyle (Brussels) for the development of my photographs. Finally I am very thankful to Dr E.H. Vokes (Tulane University) for reading and making suggestions on my manuscript and for her very helpful information.

### **LITERATURE CITED**

- Kaicher, S.D., 1980. Card catalogue of world-wide shells, Muricidae V, St. Petersburg.
- Vella, P., 1961. Australasian Typhinae (Gastropoda) with notes on the subfamily. Paleontology, 4(3): 362-91, pls. 46 and 47.
- Wells, F.E., 1983. Wonders of the Northwest. Australian Shell News, 43, July 1983.

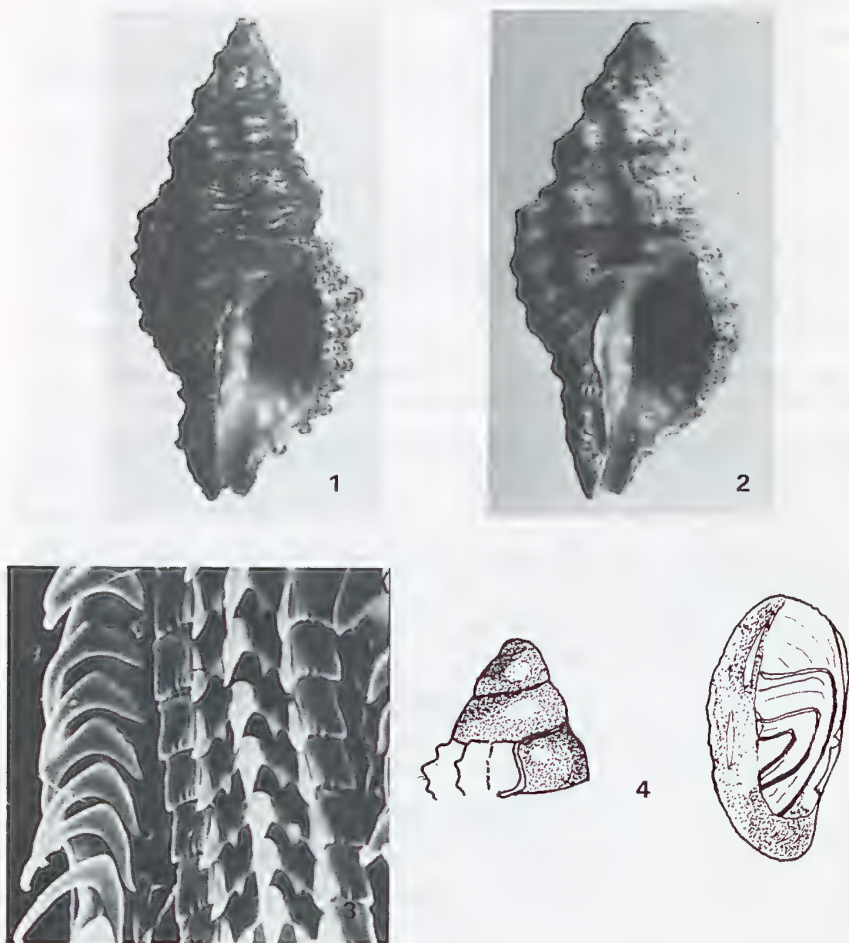


Plate 1: *Orania alexanderi*. Fig. 1: holotype (18.9 x 9.5 mm). Fig. 2: paratype Australian Museum (19 x 9.1 mm). Fig. 3: Scanning micrograph of the radula, MNHN, Paris (x 380). Fig. 4: Protoconch (x 25) and interior (x10) of operculum of *Orania alexanderi*.

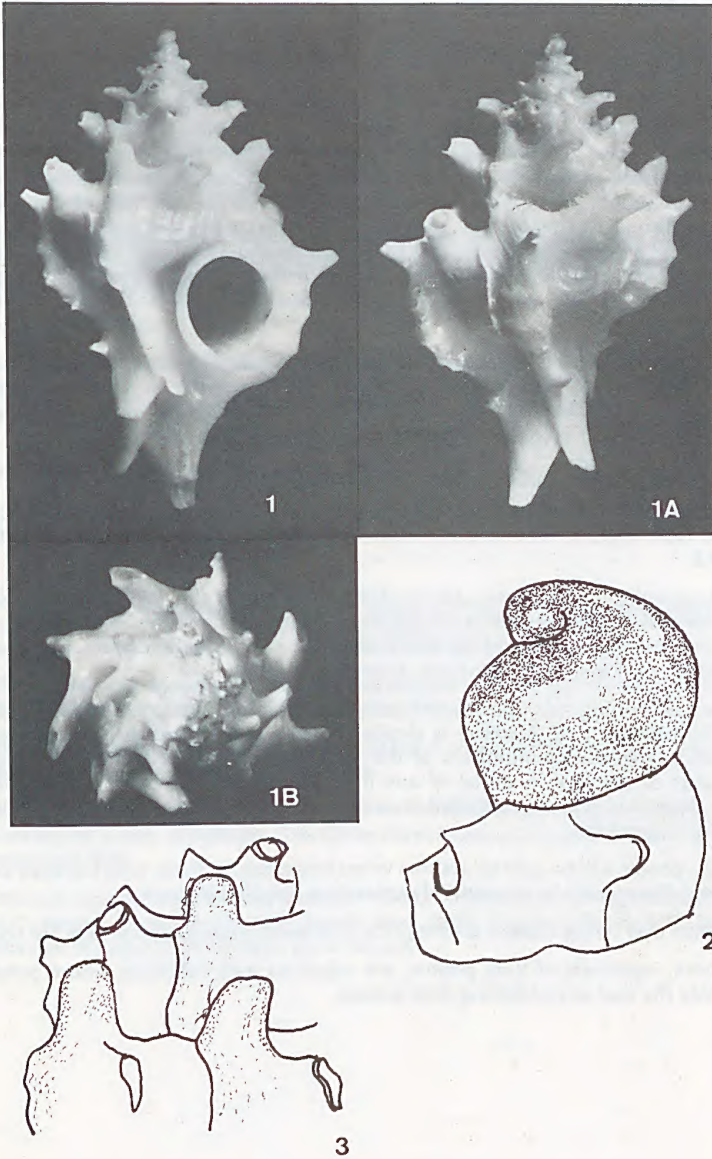


Plate 2: *Typhis wellsi*. Figs. 1-1A-1B: holotype (22 x 14.5 mm). Fig. 2: Protoconch of the holotype (x 35). Fig. 3: Details of varical buttresses (x 6).